

August 15, 1999

5618 '99 SEP 24 A9:51

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers La., Rm. 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

To Whom It May Concern:

I wanted to write and comment on the practice of forced molting currently being used on US birds. This practice throws the hens' systems into collapse, stressing and shocking their worn-out bodies into laying one more batch of eggs before being sent to slaughter. The frightened birds are deprived of food for up to two weeks, water is restricted for up to eight weeks and they are kept in pitch dark for weeks on end. As a result, hundreds of thousands die while those who survive grow weak, shed all their feathers, and lose up to 35 percent of their body weight. Forced molting also weakens hens' bones, resulting in fragile, broken limbs.

Recent research shows that forced molting can be harmful to humans as well. The studies show that forced molting **increases the frequency and severity of Salmonella enteritidis** among hens. The stressful conditions weaken their immune systems so badly that they become prone to disease and salmonella infections. **The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs.**

Please consider reducing salmonella in eggs by **eliminating the practice of forced molting**. More must be done besides putting warning labels on egg cartons and regulating egg refrigeration temperatures.

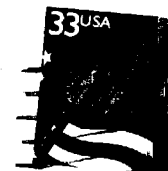
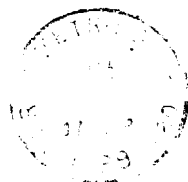
Sincerely,



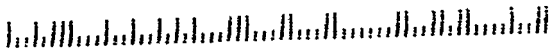
**Meredith Erickson**  
131 N. Erwin St.  
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97P-0197

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FDA  
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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION  
**CROSS REFERENCE SHEET**

Docket Number/Item Code: 98N-1230/C706

See Docket Number/Item Code: 97P-0197/C707  
96P-0418/C706